

*U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/542,005
Reply to Office Action dated November 26, 2007*

REMARKS

(1) The Examiner states that the Information Disclosure Statement is not in conformance with the regulations. The Examiner is thanked for this information. A Supplemental IDS is submitted herewith.

(2-3) The Examiner objects to the specification for confusing a shutter key and a menu key (part "a"), and also for an inconsistency between the specification and the drawing (part "b"). Correction is made as required. The Examiner also points out a typographic error in claim 1, which is corrected.

(4) Claims 1-6, 7, and 13-17 are rejected under § 101. The claims are amended in view of the Examiner's remarks. Withdrawal of the rejection is requested.

(5-6) Claims 1-4, 6-15, and 17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Yamaguchi et al., US 6,795,097. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Applicant's Hierarchy. The Applicant's specification pages 12-15 disclose a structure of "large items" which are numbered 0-5. These large items have "branch menus" also numbered 0, 1, ... and each of the branch menus can further comprise a number of "small items" also numbered according to the same scheme. For example, the first-discussed large item (page 12, line 7), labeled as large item 0, contains a branch menu 0 that contains small items labeled as 0-2. This is a tree-like structure with hierarchy: large, branch, small.

This structure is exemplified in Fig. 2 where the leftmost categories "classical," "jazz," and "others" are large items, the middle categories listing types of musical instruments are branch menus, and the small items on the right are the individual instruments. Thus, the large item "classical," numbered 0, has a branch menu "string," numbered 0, that includes a small item "violin," numbered 0.

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The Applicant's Numbers and Cross-Referencing. At page 15, lines 5-8, the specification describes how each branch menu has associated with it a set of three numbers indicating "relationships with another small item." The three numbers are: a leftmost number for a dependent large item; a middle number for a dependent branch item; and a rightmost number for a dependent small item. Each branch menu is cross-referenced to a small item that is *not included* in that branch menu, by including a path to this other small item (the path being the three numbers on the left, middle, and right).

The Examiner is invited to consider the following example: saxophone and clarinet are both small items in the branch menu devoted to woodwinds, but the saxophone is made of metal and the clarinet is made of wood. Therefore, the clarinet might be cross-referenced to the small-item viols in the string branch menu, which are also made of wood. The categories of wood, metal, and other are presented in Fig. 3. The specification at page 18, line 6, states that when a symbol translating as "wood" is selected by a cursor, the display of Fig. 13(A) results. Among these symbols are those translating as "woodwind," "flute," and "wood."

The Applicant has reviewed the disclosure of Yamaguchi, and has not seen any disclosure of such cross-referencing between different branches of a tree-like data structure. With respect, this feature distinguishes the Applicant's claims from the reference.

The Claims. Claim 1 recites this cross-referencing as "dependency relationship information indicative of dependence on a small item managed under a first management table different from the first management table to which a noticed second management table belongs is assigned to said noticed second management table, so that, when a desired small item is selected, said processor can display a plurality of small items dependent on said desired small item, based on said dependency relationship information." Independent claim 8 has similar language.

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(7-8) Dependent claims 5 and 16 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over Yamaguchi in view of Hostettler US 2003/0192030. This rejection is respectfully traversed on the basis of dependence from an allowable claim.

In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, the application is submitted to be in condition for allowance, which action, at an early date, is requested.

If, for any reason, it is felt that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact the undersigned attorney at the telephone number indicated below to discuss this case.

Respectfully submitted,

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I hereby certify that this correspondence is being facsimile transmitted to the Patent and Trademark Office (Fax No. (571-273-8300) on February 22, 2008.

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Signature *Nick Bromer*